THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE L.NARASIMHA REDDY

WRIT PETITION No.27321 OF 2005

DATED: 26-12-2005

Between:

C.V.Subbanna . . .Petitioner

And

The Regional Manager, APSRTC, Kadapa,

and others . . . .Respondents

THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE L.NARASIMHA REDDY

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O R D E R:

The petitioner is employed as a Conductor in APSRTC. While conducting the bus, he committed certain cash and ticket irregularities on 05-11-1997. He was issued a charge sheet, dated 20-11-1997, directing him to explain as to why necessary disciplinary action shall not be taken against him for the lapse on his part. He submitted his explanation to the same. Without considering the said explanation, the 2nd respondent passed an order, dated 19-03-1998, imposing penalty of stoppage of annual increment for a period of one year with cumulative effect. He challenges the same.

The only point urged by Sri S.M.Subhan, the learned counsel for the petitioner, is that the 2nd respondent imposed a penalty of stoppage of annual increment for a period of one year with cumulative effect, without conducting departmental enquiry. He placed reliance upon the judgment of the Apex Court in **KULWANTH SINGH GILL v. STATE OF PUNJAB** and submits that stoppage of increment is a major penalty and it cannot be imposed, except by conducting departmental enquiry.

Sri P.Vinayaka Swamy, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the respondents, on the other hand, submits that the penalty imposed against the petitioner itself is minimal, if the lapse on his part is taken into account.

It is a matter of record that the 2nd respondent imposed the penalty of stoppage of annual increment for a period of one year with cumulative effect on the allegation that the petitioner was negligent in performing his duties. Though a charge sheet was issued to the petitioner before the penalty was imposed, no departmental enquiry was conducted. I n **KULWANTH SINGH GILL's case** (supra), the Supreme Court held that stoppage of increments with cumulative effect is a major penalty and it cannot be imposed, except by conducting departmental enquiry. In view of the same, the impugned order cannot be sustained.

In the ordinary course of things, the impugned order needs to be set aside, leaving it open to the respondents to pass fresh orders. To avoid further delay and complication in the matter, this Court is of the view that the impugned order can be treated as the one for stoppage of annual increment for a period of one year without cumulative effect.

Hence, the writ petition is partly allowed directing that the order, dated 19-03-1998, passed by the 2nd respondent shall be treated as the one for stoppage of annual increment for a period of one year without cumulative effect. However, the petitioner shall not be entitled to any monetary benefit that had accrued up to the date of this order.

There shall be no order as to costs.

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(L.NARASIMHA REDDY, J)

26th DECEMBER, 2005.

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